

to keep more of what they earn. Our plan will also expand the child tax credit and make it available to more families, and our plan doubles the standard deduction, which will provide significant relief for those who need it the most. Under our plan, a family making \$24,000 a year will no longer owe any Federal income taxes. All of these measures will provide direct relief to working families.

Just as important for families, however, is the other half of our tax reform plan, which involves creating the kind of economic environment where hard-working Americans can thrive—the kind of environment where Americans have access to good jobs, higher wages, and more opportunities.

Over the past few weeks, I have come to the floor to talk about Republicans' tax reform principles and have highlighted some of the ways our tax reform plan will improve the economic outlook for American families. Last week, I talked about our third principle, reforming our Tax Code to keep those good-paying jobs here at home. This week I would like to spend a few minutes talking about our fourth principle, which is keeping American businesses competitive in the global economy.

In order for individual Americans to thrive economically, we need our businesses to thrive. Thriving businesses create jobs, provide opportunities, and they increase wages and invest in workers. Right now, though, our Tax Code is not helping businesses thrive, and it is making it more difficult for American businesses with an international footprint to compete in the global economy.

Our Nation has the highest corporate tax rate in the industrialized world—at least 10 percentage points higher than the majority of our international competitors. It doesn't take an economist to realize that high tax rates leave businesses with less money to invest, less money to spend on wages, less money to create new jobs, less money to devote to research and development of new products and services, and less money to put back into new property or equipment for those businesses. This situation is compounded when an American business has international competitors that are paying a lot less in taxes than you are. It is no surprise that U.S. businesses struggling to stay competitive in the global economy don't have a lot of resources to devote to creating new jobs and increasing wages.

On top of our high business tax rates, there is another major problem with our Tax Code that puts American businesses at a competitive disadvantage globally—our outdated worldwide tax system.

What does it mean to have a worldwide tax system? It means that American companies pay U.S. taxes on the profit they make here at home, as well as on part of the profits they make abroad once they bring that money

back home to the United States. The problem with this is that most other major world economies have shifted from a worldwide tax system to a territorial tax system.

In a territorial tax system, taxes are paid on the money earned where it is made and only there. You are not taxed again when you bring money back to your home country. Most American companies' foreign competitors have been operating under a territorial tax system for years. So they pay a lot less taxes on the money they make abroad than American companies pay. That leaves American companies at a disadvantage.

Foreign companies can underbid American companies for new business simply because they don't have to add as much in taxes into the price of their products or services. When foreign companies beat out American companies for new business, it is not just American companies that suffer. It is American workers. That is why a key part of the tax framework that Republicans unveiled last week involves lowering our massive corporate tax rate and transitioning our tax system from a worldwide tax system into a territorial tax system. By making American businesses more competitive in the global economy, we can improve the playing field for American workers.

There are a lot of other things we are going to do to help hard-working families and American workers, from improving the tax situation for small businesses to helping family business owners, farmers, and ranchers like those in my home State of South Dakota by repealing the death tax.

Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle like to complain about our plans to repeal the death tax. They complain that it is not something to really worry about since they claim relatively few estates are expected to actually have to pay the tax. Well, I would like them to come and talk to some of the farmers and ranchers in my State of South Dakota. Some of these farmers and ranchers are paying tens of thousands of dollars a year in an effort to avoid having their families hit by the estate tax when they die. Why? Because they know that without careful and costly planning, if the Federal Government comes around after their death demanding a staggering 40 percent of their estate, their children won't have the money to pay the government without risking the farm or the ranch.

Farming and ranching is a land-rich but cash-poor business. Farmers and ranchers own valuable land, but they are only earning cash on the crops they grow or the livestock they raise on that land. So while their overall farm or ranch may have a substantial value, the amount of money they have coming in is relatively small and subject to the swings in the market from year to year. Too often, when farmers and ranchers die, the vast portion of their estate is made up of their land, while

actual disposable income is a very small part of it. If they don't take measures to avoid having their family hit by the death tax, the family will have no choice but to sell off some or all of their land to pay the government, which means, in many cases, losing the family's farm or ranch. And the same situation faces other types of family-owned businesses across the country where the value of the estate is tied up in that business.

Removing the threat of the death tax for family-owned businesses, farms, and ranches would free up resources that these business owners could invest in their businesses and in our economy instead of on complex estate plans, insurance, and expensive tax professionals.

Before I move on, let me just remind everybody that when we talk about the death tax, we are talking about double and sometimes triple taxation. The money the government is taxing has already been taxed at least once. It boggles the mind that some think that a person's death is justification for taxing his or her income a second or a third time. Death should not be a taxable event. When someone dies, they shouldn't have to see the undertaker and the IRS at the same time.

Our Tax Code is increasingly strangling our economy and placing heavy burdens on hard-working American families. If we want to improve the economic situation of American families, comprehensive tax reform is essential.

Republicans in the House and the Senate are continuing to work on the final draft of the bill that we will take up later this fall. I look forward to passing comprehensive tax reform that will help American families thrive, that will create greater economic growth, better paying jobs, higher wages, and bigger paychecks for American workers.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:33 p.m., recessed until 2:16 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. STRANGE).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

LAS VEGAS MASS SHOOTING

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, a tragedy took place in Las Vegas this week. It is a tragedy that has affected hundreds of families. It is a tragedy in which each and every one of us sends our prayers to those who have lost loved ones. And to those who have family members who are now hospitalized, we send our prayers to you as well, with the great hope that a full recovery is in their future.

This was an unimaginable event that occurred in our country. It is now time for us to talk about this issue. There are many people who say this is not the time to talk about it, but the truth is, the only thing the National Rifle Association wants more than to sell lots of gun silencers is to put a silencer on the debate about gun safety legislation. The only thing the NRA wants more than allowing nationwide concealed carry laws is to conceal the overwhelming support for background checks. The only thing the NRA wants more than to stifle smart gun technology is to stifle debate on gun violence prevention.

So to anyone who says having this debate now is too soon, it is already too late for at least 59 people in Las Vegas and hundreds of others who were wounded. We should not wait another day.

We need to pass commonsense gun safety legislation so that we can hold a moment of silence for the National Rifle Association's stranglehold on American politics. That is what must end in our country.

We need a debate on this floor on background checks. We need a debate in this Chamber on whether we are going to do research on the relationship between guns and violence in our society. We don't need to debate the issue of bringing silencers into our society that can be attached to guns and that would have made it infinitely more difficult for the police to find where the shooter was or for people to know that they needed to hide or move to a more secure location. That would not have happened. We would not have had 59 deaths; we could have had 259 deaths, 559 deaths, or 959 deaths because a silencer would have given less notice to all of those people that they should be moving and hiding and protecting themselves and their loved ones.

On concealed carry, the Republicans are moving a bill that allows for someone to conceal a gun under a law in one State—because that State allows you to conceal a gun, you would be able to move into any other State and continue to conceal a gun even though that State's laws prohibit concealing guns. They want that law to move through.

So when the Republicans talk about debating gun control, what they are talking about is lessening the safety around these guns, lowering the standards that would protect people, and allowing for silencers to now be proliferating on these assault weapons, these weapons of war that should not be on the streets of our country and that have the capacity to kill people without people hearing them.

They say they are needed because we need to protect people's hearing when they are firing assault weapons. Well, it is more important that the police hear the bullets and that the people who might be hit hear the sound of those bullets as they are leaving the

gun. That is going to provide far more protection. It is far more important that the police in a State or in a city know that someone has a concealed weapon. It is critically important for police protection. But the National Rifle Association does not want those kinds of protections to remain on the books. That is who they are. That is what they want.

What should we be debating? We should be debating background checks. We should be debating whether someone should be able to buy a gun on Instagram and turn it into an "instagram" without background checks. That is what we should be talking about out here.

Over 90 percent of Americans want stronger background checks. Yet the Republican leadership turns a deaf ear to the request of the American people because the National Rifle Association does not want there to be background checks on people who are buying guns in our country.

More Americans have died from gun violence in the past 50 years on the streets of America than have died in all of our Nation's wars overseas in our entire history. Let me say that again. More people have died from guns in our own country in the last 50 years than all of our soldiers, sailors, Air Force, and marines have died going all the way back to 1776. That is how much of an epidemic this is in our country. It is an epidemic that now kills 33,000 people every single year in our country, but the Federal Government's investment in researching gun violence is zero.

Diabetes—76,000 U.S. deaths annually; they get \$170 million at the Centers for Disease Control. Flu—57,000 deaths a year; they get \$187 million for research. Asthma—3,600 deaths a year; they get \$29 million for research at the Centers for Disease Control. Gun violence—zero. An epidemic is ravaging our country, and the Republicans will not fund research to find this link between violence and the use of guns in our society, to do the research that can help us to reduce this carnage on the streets of our country. And because of an appropriations rider from the 1990s, the Centers for Disease Control hasn't conducted research into the causes of gun violence and how to prevent it. If 20 young children in Newtown had died of Ebola, we would have invested funding to study it. If 59 people in Las Vegas died of Zika, would we study it? Absolutely. But our country is suffering from an illness, and we have let it spread because we refuse to write a treatment plan.

The American Medical Association supports ending the ban on research. The American Public Health Association supports ending the ban on research. More than 141 groups want to end this ban on researching the link between guns and violence in our society.

The bill I have introduced with Representative MALONEY gives \$10 million to the Centers for Disease Control

every single year. Shouldn't we be studying how to stop people from firing guns and give the medical, the scientific, and the public health community the resources they need?

We also need to develop new smart gun technologies that would improve safety and reduce accidental shootings. My bill would authorize grants to develop and personalize handgun technology to increase efficiency and decrease costs. If you can use a fingerprint to operate your iPhone, you should be able to do the same thing with your gun to make sure that safety is ensured, to make sure it is your thumbprint on that gun, that if your gun is stolen or lost, no one else would be able to use that gun. Does that make sense? Well, your thumb can work for your smartphone. Your thumb could also work for smart gun technology.

So this is where we are. We are at this critical point where some people are saying: Not now. It is inappropriate. We shouldn't be raising these issues.

But what we should be debating is what the American people want us to debate. Over 90 percent want background checks on anyone who buys a gun in our country to make sure they are qualified, to make sure they do not have something in their background that should disqualify them from owning a gun in our country.

Our debate here should really be about one thing: making the NRA stand for "not relevant anymore" in American politics. The task for the Republican Party is different. It will be whether they will kill these bills that would legalize more fully silencers being put on automatic weapons in our country, kill the concealed carry law, which is moving through the House and Senate driven by Republicans, and, instead, debate the kinds of things that make our country safer, the kinds of things that poll after poll is showing that the American people want us to do. That is going to be our challenge in the days and weeks and months ahead.

This is the time; this is the place. We are the people who must be conducting this debate to make sure we add an extra measure of safety that American families can rely upon.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, my colleague from Massachusetts has referred to the tragedy that we all watched unfold late on Sunday evening in Las Vegas, NV—the tragedy, the horror, the shock of so many. Alaska has felt the brunt of that tragedy as well. We lost two Alaskans; at least one other was injured. Mr. Adrian Murfitt from Anchorage, a commercial fisherman, lost his life that evening. Dorene Anderson, who is a mom and self-described hockey promoter, will not be returning to Alaska with her family. Rob McIntosh, who is a realtor

from the Fairbanks-North Pole area, was also injured. Our prayers are with him and with all of the families.

Whether they are from Alaska or from around the country, the tragedy, the loss, is just a shocking emotion that has been brought to this Nation. It is really horrifying on so many different levels. I express my condolences not only to the families of the Alaskans whom we have lost but to all of those who are suffering.

PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS
RECOVERY EFFORT

Mr. President, I want to speak on another matter, and that is the tragedy related to natural disasters we have seen visited on our country, the devastating impacts that Hurricanes Irma and Maria have had on the U.S. Virgin Islands and in Puerto Rico, the current relief efforts that are underway on those islands, and how we might help in the long term to rebuild, particularly as it relates to their electric grid and their power sector.

Mr. President, as the Presiding Officer serves on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I have the honor of being the chairman of that Committee, and that is the committee of jurisdiction for our territories.

Our committee's history dates back to 1816, when it was then called the Committee on Public Lands. The acquisition of Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam in 1898, through the Treaty of Paris, led to the creation of the Committee on Insular Affairs in 1899. The U.S. Virgin Islands were included in that committee's jurisdiction following their purchase from Denmark in 1917.

In 1946, the Committee on Public Lands and the Committee on Insular Affairs merged to form the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. In 1977, the committees were again reorganized, leading to the current structure of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Our committee has had the proud distinction of working with the territories for the last 70-plus years. Certainly, following Hurricanes Irma and Maria, we are committed to upholding our responsibilities to the people of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Perhaps it is because I was born in a territory—I need to actually look this up; it may be that I am the only Member of Congress or Member in the Senate who was actually born in a territory—but I feel an affinity. One would not think there is much connection between a small island territory like Puerto Rico and the large landmass that we have in Alaska, but in many ways, Alaska is also islanded in the sense that we are not part of the continental 48. So I do follow with great interest and care how Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are included.

With the current focus almost entirely on Puerto Rico right now, it can seem like a distant memory that only 2 weeks ago, before Hurricane Maria, we had Hurricane Irma, which hit the

islands of St. Thomas and St. John as a category 5 hurricane. One category 5 is bad enough, but then to have a second category 5 hurricane hit just 2 weeks later, this time impacting the island of St. Croix, is almost unfathomable.

The devastation we have seen in both the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico can seem overwhelming. Relief operations for the islands are different from what you have with the mainland. When you recognize how you move to accommodate relief, everything has to be brought in by ship or by plane. You don't have the convoys of trucks rolling down the highway from an adjoining State. You don't have the ability to take alternative routes to reach the affected areas. Once goods are delivered to ports, for instance, it is another challenge, then, to get them from the port for inland distribution.

Even under normal operating conditions, moving the amount of containers that have flooded into the territories would be a challenge, but when you add into it the debris, the downed power lines, the washed-out bridges and roads, the lack of power, and the driver shortages, the challenges become colossal.

Then you have other limiting factors. You have competition for hotel rooms and other lodging as you bring in relief workers to go to the islands while refugees who have lost their homes try to leave. Again, the logistics are almost overwhelming; it is a logistical nightmare.

Despite these very considerable hurdles, we do see that progress is being made. According to recent reports from the Army Corps of Engineers, Federal and local response crews have been working to reopen the ports and runways. In some cases, we have seen sunken ships that need to be removed before a port can begin operations again.

In Puerto Rico, 13 of 16 ports are open or open with restrictions. In the U.S. Virgin Islands, five of nine ports are open or open with restrictions.

In addition, 15 of 17 priority dams in Puerto Rico have already been inspected. In the case of Guajataca Dam, it is in the process of being reinforced. The dam's spillway continues to erode. Rainfall has increased the water level in the reservoir. We have seen that the debris and the downed power lines need to be removed to allow helicopters to place 44 concrete barriers within the spillway channel. In fact, 900 super sandbags are on their way. Pumps and piping are being procured to help decrease the water level. There are a lot of hands on deck there.

For electricity, as of October 1, 5 percent of customers in Puerto Rico have had their power restored. The Puerto Rico electric utility expects to have power restored to 15 percent of customers over the next 2 weeks.

I looked at this aspect of it and recognize that it is still pretty warm in Puerto Rico. I checked the weather

this afternoon, and it is 87 degrees. Over the next couple of days, it will be 93 degrees. Making sure that folks have power, have an ability to keep fans, to have air conditioning—this is critical.

Assessments show significant damage to the transmission and distribution systems, so, again, a great deal of work is yet underway there.

In the Virgin Islands, 15 percent of customers in St. Thomas and 10 percent of customers in St. Croix have had their power restored. This includes the airports and the hospitals.

On the hospitals, I would note that both the hospitals in the U.S. Virgin Islands—one in St. Thomas and one in St. Croix—have sustained heavy damage and may need to be replaced. Again, long term, moving forward, this is critical infrastructure.

We do know that in the immediate term, the primary relief that Congress can provide is through our appropriations process. We will soon be considering another tranche of disaster relief funds so that those impacted by these hurricanes have the food, water, and medicine they need as recovery efforts continue.

Other options, such as making the rum tax cover-over payments permanent and increasing or lifting the cap on community disaster loans may also need to be considered as ways to get the islands back on their feet.

Another part of our responsibility, though, is to look at potential long-term solutions to persistent problems. In the case of Puerto Rico, it is their antiquated electric grid and power generation system.

I have had many conversations with many colleagues in these past couple of weeks. I am concerned that current disaster recovery rules may mandate that the damaged or destroyed entity be restored with similar material, compared to its condition prior to the disaster. What may seem like a good, general rule of thumb in some scenarios, like this one—I don't think it makes a lot of sense. Why would we consider spending hundreds of millions of dollars to rebuild what was an inefficient, unreliable electric power grid in Puerto Rico?

Making sure that we do right going forward is important for us. I am going to be meeting with officials with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. They have been tasked by FEMA with rebuilding Puerto Rico's electricity grid. I am going to meet with the Army Corps and the Department of Energy to see if there is a way to modernize Puerto Rico's grid during its rebuild, whether by administrative or legislative action. I think we need to look at different considerations moving forward.

There has been a discussion about whether it makes more sense to bury transmission lines rather than rebuild towers. We need to look at microgrids and consider whether they should be developed to provide power to communities throughout the island even if the

islandwide grid is down. This is something our committee has been keenly focused on—the application of microgrids and how they might be better utilized.

I would note on this matter that the urban area of Mayaguez is currently receiving power from the hydro-gas plant that is located within its municipality. It is essentially its own microgrid. But the damaged transmission lines prevent electricity from moving to other municipalities across the island.

There are other considerations, including the role that distributed generation plays. Can these Federal entities work with the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority, PREPA, to develop a demonstration project for the island that would make the grid more efficient, more reliable, reduce the cost of electricity to consumers? These are all things that need to be considered. We had a hearing in the Energy Committee this morning on energy storage technologies, and it was mentioned there that regional technology demonstrations might be particularly helpful for Puerto Rico at this time.

I intend to visit Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands with other Members a few weeks from now. We know President Trump is there today. We are going to wait until the situation has stabilized just a bit more to allow for these relief efforts to continue. When we have an opportunity to observe the situation ourselves, I think it is worth noting that we will, on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, be holding a hearing on the impacts of Hurricanes Irma and Maria on both Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and I anticipate we will be doing that in the coming weeks. We want to look at not only the damage caused and where recovery efforts stand but also lessons learned as well as opportunities moving forward as to how we can rebuild Puerto Rico's electric grid to better than it was before so it does have a resiliency and it does have a sustainability that I think is imperative moving forward.

We recognize that the islands have faced a real tragedy in this natural disaster, but, from this, can we work quickly to stabilize things in the short term but allow this to be an opportunity to think about Puerto Rico's long-term energy future—an energy future that is more resilient and is more sustainable.

So our thoughts and prayers are with all who were impacted by these incredibly powerful storms as they dig out, as they rebuild, as they restart their lives, and just as we will take care of the people of Texas and Louisiana and Florida, I want to make sure the people of Puerto Rico and the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands know we stand united with them during these exceptionally difficult times and that we will work with them as partners to make their islands stronger, more resilient, and better prepared for whatever the future may bring them.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I would like to start by thanking Senator MURKOWSKI for her leadership as chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, on which I also serve, in addressing some of the long-term needs of Puerto Rico.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. President, the American people are relieved that the latest version of TrumpCare went down in defeat last week. We won this battle because millions of people made their voices heard, but the danger remains. We cannot grow complacent.

The President and his allies in Congress are hoping that in our relief, we will move on and pay attention to other things. With this President, I have to say, and this administration, there is always a fresh outrage to contend with. After his latest failure, the President has turned to sabotage and neglect to accomplish his goal of denying millions of people access to healthcare under the Affordable Care Act.

The danger is real. The President's continued threats to eliminate cost-sharing reduction payments that help reduce out-of-pocket costs for consumers under the ACA, for example, are already destabilizing health insurance in Hawaii and across the country.

This year, HMSA and Kaiser—two of Hawaii's largest providers of health insurance—proposed large rate increases for customers on the exchange in response to the uncertainty posed by the President's threats to eliminate the cost-sharing payments. These companies have been told to submit two rate proposals, one if cost-sharing remains in place and the other if these cost-sharing provisions are eliminated.

If the President eliminates cost-sharing payments, Hawaii residents could see an 8-percent increase in their premiums on the individual markets. This translates into millions of dollars more that Hawaii residents will need to pay. This is irresponsible, unacceptable, and completely within the President's power to prevent.

Unfortunately, the President isn't the only member of his administration intent on sabotaging the Affordable Care Act. The Secretary of Health and Human Services resigned in disgrace last week, but the work he set in motion at the Department to make it more difficult for people to sign up for insurance continues apace.

The administration has already shortened the open enrollment period from 90 days to 45 days and proposed massive cuts for advertising and call centers during this shortened window. To make matters worse, they are taking healthcare.gov down for so-called maintenance at peak times on the weekends so people have even less time to sign up for coverage.

The sabotage doesn't end there. The administration is also calling for a 40-

percent cut in funding for navigators who help vulnerable communities find and secure coverage. In the past, organizations in Hawaii like We Are Oceania and the Legal Aid Society have received navigator grants to help enroll low-income Hawaii residents, COFA citizens, individuals with disabilities, and other underserved communities in programs under the ACA.

Last week, I had the opportunity to meet with Josie Howard, We Are Oceania's program director. Josie and her team navigate a multitude of language and cultural barriers to help COFA citizens who have been unfairly disqualified from Medicaid to enroll in the exchange. President Trump's determination to sabotage the ACA undermines the hard work Josie and organizations like We Are Oceania are doing to expand healthcare access to underserved communities.

We need to keep fighting back against the President's sabotage campaign, but we can also work together in Congress to improve our Nation's healthcare system and renew programs that millions of people depend on every year in our country.

On Saturday, Congress allowed funding for the Community Health Center Fund—CHCF—to lapse without being renewed. CHCs across the country will be forced to lay off staff, reduce hours of operations, scale back investments, or even close, denying healthcare coverage or services to millions of people in need all across the country.

Through the ACA, the CHCF provided increased funding for community health centers across the country to modernize facilities, hire new staff, and expand services in underrepresented communities. If Congress does not renew the program, community health centers will face a 70-percent cut in their Federal funding, and this will have a devastating impact for community health centers in Hawaii, like Malama I Ke Ola in Wailuku on Maui.

Thanks to the CHCF funding and the ACA's Medicaid expansion, Malama I Ke Ola has been able to expand the services it provides to Maui residents and improve outcomes for thousands of people—particularly in the area of women's health.

In the years following the passage and implementation of the ACA, Malama I Ke Ola has worked to expand OB-GYN services at the clinic. With increased funding, the clinic has purchased new, high-definition ultrasound machines, hired new physicians, and upgraded its prenatal care facilities. The center recently signed a new contract with the University of Hawaii to provide overnight fetal medical services at the clinic instead of having to refer patients to large public hospitals on Oahu. Keeping these patients on Maui not only reduces overall healthcare spending but also allows patients to stay close to home and their families.

If Congress does not renew CHCF funding, this program—and hundreds of

others across the State and country—will be at risk.

Congressional inaction has also threatened the future of the Children's Health Insurance Program—or CHIP—which provides health insurance to 9 million low-income children and mothers across the country and 27,000 in Hawaii. We should act as soon as possible to pass a bipartisan reauthorization that Senators HATCH and WYDEN negotiated in the Senate Finance Committee.

It seems as though every day the President tweets something new and outrageous to distract us from the true issues facing our country, whether it is the Mueller investigation or his decision to rescind DACA and place hundreds of thousands of DACA Dreamers at risk for deportation. This is a tactic the President has used to great effect during our many debates on healthcare. The President hopes we will be paying more attention to his attacks on NFL players or demeaning comments about the mayor of San Juan instead of his dangerous proposals to take healthcare away from millions of people in our country. We have to keep paying attention and keep our eyes on the ball. We have to keep speaking up and fighting back.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE BUDGET

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, after failing to throw 32 million Americans off of the health insurance they currently have last week, the Republicans are continuing their attack against the working families of our country with one of the most destructive budgets in American history.

I know the American people today, for very good reason, are preoccupied with the horror of what happened in Las Vegas, and people are horrified about what has happened in Puerto Rico, but I would beg of the American people to please pay attention to the budget proposal and the so-called tax reform ideas brought by the Republican leadership in the Senate, as well as in the House.

This proposal would cause devastating economic pain for tens of millions of Americans by, on the one hand, giving incredibly large tax breaks for the wealthiest people in the country, while at the same time making it harder for our children to get a decent education, harder for the families of this country to get the healthcare they need, harder for families, literally, to put food on the table, harder to protect our environment, and harder for the elderly to live their retirement years with dignity.

This is the Robin Hood proposal in reverse. The Robin Hood principle in reverse is that instead of taking from the rich to help the poor, this proposal makes massive cuts in programs desperately needed by the middle class and working families of our country, precisely to give unbelievably large tax breaks to the people on top—the people who least need those tax breaks.

At a time of massive income and wealth inequality, where we have more inequality today than at any time since the 1920s and more inequality than almost any major country on Earth, where the very, very rich are becoming much richer and we have 40 million people living in poverty and tens of millions of middle-class families are going nowhere in a hurry, this Republican budget, according to the Tax Policy Center, at the end of 10 years, would provide 80 percent of the tax benefits to the top 1 percent.

Right now, today, the rich are doing phenomenally well. Everybody understands that. The middle class is shrinking. But according to the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center, by the end of the decade, nearly 80 percent of the tax benefits in the Republican plan would go to the top 1 percent—under this plan, this Republican plan. The top one-tenth of 1 percent, the richest of the rich, would receive a tax break of over \$1 million a year.

At a time when so many of our families are struggling to put food on the table, struggling to figure out how to send their kids to college, struggling to figure out how to pay for childcare, we have a Republican tax proposal that would provide trillions of dollars in tax breaks to the richest people in this country.

This is a budget that would increase the Federal deficit by \$1.5 trillion over the next decade. We have heard on the Senate floor my Republican friends talking about how worried they are about the \$20 trillion national debt and how high the deficits are. This proposal, designed to give tax breaks to the wealthiest people in this country, would increase the Federal deficit by \$1.5 trillion over the next decade, and, by the way, this is a conservative estimate. There are those who think the deficit would go up a lot more than that.

This is a Republican proposal that eliminates the estate tax. What is the estate tax? Republicans name it the “death tax,” but let us be clear about what this tax is and who benefits from it. Despite Republican efforts trying to find farmers or ranchers who would benefit from it, this is not legislation designed to help farmers or ranchers. This is legislation designed to help the top two-tenths of 1 percent. So 99.8 percent of the American people will not benefit one nickel from the repeal of the estate tax. Only the wealthiest of the wealthy will benefit. If this Republican proposal to repeal the estate tax would go through, the Walton family of Walmart, the wealthiest family in

America, would receive a tax cut of up to \$52 billion.

Does anybody for one second think that, at a time when so many of our people are struggling and when we have a \$20 trillion national debt, we should be passing legislation that gives the wealthiest family in this country up to a \$52 billion tax break by repealing the estate tax?

But it is not just the Walton family, of course. This is a budget that says that if you are the second wealthiest family in America, the Koch brothers—and this, by the way, is just coincidental, no doubt. I know it is amazing how these coincidences take place. The Koch brothers are a family who contributed hundreds of millions of dollars year after year to the Republican Party to elect candidates who represent the wealthy and powerful. Just coincidentally, that family would receive a tax break of up to \$38 billion.

People ask why the Koch brothers are contributing hundreds of millions of dollars every campaign cycle. That is a huge amount of money. That is a huge amount of money for normal families, but when you are the second wealthiest family and you have a tax break of \$38 billion, contributing a few million dollars every campaign cycle is pocket change and is a good investment.

This is a budget that will cut Medicare by \$450 billion. Right now in this country, we have millions and millions of seniors who are struggling to make ends meet. They can't afford their prescription drugs. They can't afford to keep their homes warm in the winter-time. Yet this Republican budget would cut Medicare by \$450 billion.

Now, the Republicans tried, time after time, despite massive opposition from the American people, to repeal the Affordable Care Act. In every one of their pieces of legislation, they made devastating cuts in Medicaid. Well, they are back again. Ostensibly, this is not a healthcare piece of legislation. It is a budget. It is so-called tax reform. There is \$1 trillion of cuts in the Medicaid Program. So if you were worried last week, 2 weeks ago, and 1 month ago about what the terrific Republican healthcare bills would do, stay worried because this bill will cut \$1 trillion over 10 years in Medicaid, resulting in at least 15 million Americans losing their health insurance.

Can you imagine a set of priorities that says that we are going to throw 15 million people off of health insurance in order to give tens of billions of dollars in tax breaks to the wealthiest families in this country? Unbelievable.

It really is unbelievable.

This proposal not only adds to the deficit, not only makes massive cuts to Medicare and Medicaid, it also impacts the American people in many ways. We have a program in this country called the Women, Infants, and Children Program, and at a time when the United States has the highest rate of infant mortality of any major country on

Earth, what we do to try to deal with that issue is provide help to low-income pregnant women and their babies after the babies are born. This Republican budget would make about \$6.5 billion in cuts to the WIC Program, eliminating nutrition assistance to over 1.2 million pregnant women, new moms, babies, and toddlers in Vermont and all over this country.

Here are the priorities: Tax breaks for the Walton family, for the Koch brothers' families, who are billionaires, and cuts in programs for low-income, pregnant women who want to have healthy babies.

At a time when the cost of childcare has skyrocketed all over this country—in the State of Vermont, it is a very serious problem; families cannot find affordable childcare—the Republican budget eliminates Head Start services for 25,000 children each and every year by cutting this program by about \$3 billion. In total, the Republican budget would cut more than \$5 trillion from education, healthcare, affordable housing, childcare, transportation, and other programs the working families of this country desperately rely upon.

Let's be clear about something else. This is not me talking; Republican economists are saying the same thing.

What is the theory underlying this whole approach of giving tax breaks to billionaires? The theory is that when you give tax breaks to billionaires and large, multinational corporations, somehow or another, they are going to start using the new revenue they acquire to invest in the economy and create decent-paying jobs. This is the so-called trickle-down economic theory, and this is a theory that Senate Republicans and President Trump have embraced with this budget.

The fact is that anyone who looks at history understands that whole theory is a fraud. It has always been an abysmal failure. Since Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush slashed taxes on the wealthy and deregulated Wall Street, trillions of dollars in wealth have been redistributed from the middle class and working families to a handful of millionaires and billionaires. That is what trickle-down economics results in—a transfer of wealth from the middle class to the people on top—and that is exactly what this Republican proposal will do.

Today we have more wealth inequality than at any time since the 1920s. Unbelievably, the top one-tenth of 1 percent now owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent. This budget would make a very bad situation worse, and it would increase the level of wealth inequality in America today.

As the ranking member of the Budget Committee, I intend to do everything I can to oppose this absurd set of priorities, and when I do that, I am speaking for the vast majority of the American people. Poll after poll after poll tells us that the American people do not think billionaires need more tax

breaks. Poll after poll after poll tells us that the American people do not agree with the Republican leadership when they want to throw millions of people off of the health insurance they have. This is not a budget for the American people. This is not a budget for economic growth. This is a budget paid for and fought for by the Koch brothers and a handful of billionaires who will gain very handsomely if this budget were to be passed.

I would remind my Republican colleagues—and this is not a very radical idea—that we were elected to the Senate not just to represent a handful of billionaires; we were elected to the Senate to do our best for the middle class and working families of our country. This should not be legislation designed as payback for hundreds of millions of dollars in campaign contributions. We need to pass legislation that protects the interests of working families and the middle class and lower income people.

Thank you, Mr. President.

(Mr. STRANGE assumed the Chair.)

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING PETE DOMENICI

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I am joined today by my colleague from New Mexico, Senator HEINRICH. We thought we would come to the floor together and talk about Senator Domenici, our former colleague who passed away recently.

Pietro Vichi Domenici was born to Italian immigrants in Albuquerque, NM, in 1932. He was a grocer's son. He worked in his parents' store and attended Catholic school. He graduated from our own University of New Mexico. He pitched in college on the Albuquerque Dukes' farm team, and he taught high school mathematics. He went to law school and built a law practice. He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1973 and became New Mexico's longest serving Senator.

He was a husband, father, and grandfather. He married Nancy Burke right out of law school, and his beautiful wife of 59 years was key to his long and successful career. She is a good friend of ours, and we spent an hour with her in Albuquerque a little over a week ago. She is still very strong, and she is still very focused, as one would expect as a mother and grandmother of her children and grandchildren.

Pete Domenici was a statesman. He worked across party lines to find pragmatic solutions for the American people. New Mexicans will always remember him as one of the strongest fighters our State will ever know.

Senator Domenici and I belonged to different political parties, and we didn't always agree on things, but I always appreciated that he cared deeply about the issues, and he put the Nation and New Mexico's interests first as he

saw them. I join all of New Mexico in thanking him and in mourning his passing.

Senator Domenici's math skills and his beginnings in local government served him well during his 36 years in the U.S. Senate. Anyone who has served in city government knows the importance of a budget. Sitting as chair or ranking member on the Senate Budget Committee for 22 years, he held the Federal Government to the same rigorous, logical standard. He mastered the complexities of the Federal budget and served longer in a leadership position on that committee than any other Senator. He was a budget deficit hawk and a realist. He understood that supply-side economics do not work and that big tax cuts will not result in growth leading to a balanced budget. He went up against his own party, and he went up against President Ronald Reagan on the same budget issue.

In the 1990s, he worked with President Clinton to produce a budget surplus for fiscal year 1998—the first surplus in our budget since 1969. His willingness to work with Democrats, his pragmatism, and his stature with his own party made it possible.

On the Budget Committee, he understood how to align New Mexico and national interests.

He recognized the potential of our National Labs—Los Alamos and Sandia—and the potential they had for our State. He understood their importance to the national interest. He championed their work for decades. Our Labs provide thousands of good jobs in central and northern New Mexico, and the breadth and depth of their research and scientific contributions to our Nation are nothing short of astonishing. Pete Domenici played a critical role in the Labs' developments.

He also had a key appreciation of the importance to New Mexico and the Nation of our military bases. In 2005, Cannon Air Force Base in southern New Mexico was slated to close. This would have cost New Mexico lots of jobs and would have had a devastating impact on the overall economy of the State. Senator Domenici, along with the entire delegation and Governor Richardson, worked to secure a different and critical mission for Cannon Air Force Base. Today, the 27th Special Operations Wing is going strong at Cannon. Six thousand men and women are employed, and rural Roosevelt and Curry Counties benefit from the base's \$500 million economic impact.

Senator Domenici's fingerprints are not only all over the Budget Committee but are all over the Energy and Natural Resources Committee—which he chaired for 4 years in the early 2000s—and the Indian Affairs Committee, which I am fortunate to sit on today. He helped position the United States to be energy independent through the Energy Policy Acts of 2005 and 2007—the last time we really had bipartisan energy acts. He was a strong advocate on behalf of Tribes, working

to advance Indian healthcare and resolve longstanding water rights disputes, protecting Native art from counterfeiting, and improving reservation roads.

My Uncle Mo talked a lot about the importance of being able to disagree without being disagreeable and to work together, if possible. Senator Domenici understood that while the delegation was divided by party, it was united in its love for New Mexico. He knew that New Mexico would be stronger if everyone worked together. It is partly thanks to him that our delegation continues a tradition of working together regardless of party.

Senator Domenici's commitment to bipartisanship did not end in 2009 with his Senate tenure; he continued to try to find solutions that worked for everyone as a senior fellow at the Bipartisan Policy Center in Washington.

The Pete V. Domenici Institute for Public Policy at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces carries on his tradition through scholarship. The Senator said:

It's time for us to join together and take these [partisan] issues out of politics. The problems we face are so big, people from both sides need to sit down and say, "We can't approach this the normal way." Some great leadership is needed.

We could really use that commitment to bipartisanship in the Senate halls today.

Senator Domenici was in Washington for many years, but he never was out of touch with everyday New Mexicans. Whether it was the acequia repairs in the Espanola Valley, creating a port of entry at Santa Teresa, funding new fighter jets at Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque, establishing the Petroglyph National Monument, protecting Valles Caldera, forming the Hispanic Cultural Center and Museum in Albuquerque, Pete Domenici identified New Mexico's needs and came up with solutions.

Pete and Nancy had a special passion for people who live with mental illness, borne from his own family's experience. This is an issue that he and I talked a lot about and that our two families shared. He worked across the aisle for many years to achieve parity in insurance coverage between mental healthcare and medical services. Any family who experiences serious mental illness understands that the two should be treated the same and that adequate mental healthcare is absolutely necessary.

In 2008, Congress passed the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act. That Federal law means that millions of persons with mental illness and substance abuse disorders have better access to the care they really need.

Senator Domenici spoke passionately and personally about mental health. He also did so on immigration. His mother originally immigrated to the United States illegally. During World War II, she was taken in a raid aimed at

"Italian sympathizers." Those of us who were here during the immigration debates in 2006 remember his plainspoken and moving speech on the floor of the Senate, where he said:

I understand this whole idea of a household with a father who is American and a mother who is not, but they are living, working, and getting ahead. I understand that they are just like every other family in America. There is nothing different. They have the same love, same hope, same will and same aspirations as those of us who were born here have.

I couldn't agree more.

Pete Domenici, my good friend, son of Italian immigrant grocers, a great Senator, a great American, and a great New Mexican, thank you for your remarkable contributions. You leave an exceptional legacy for New Mexico and for the Nation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I am really proud to come to the floor today to join my fellow Senator from New Mexico, TOM UDALL, to recognize the life and service of the longest serving Senator from our incredible State of New Mexico, Senator Pete Domenici.

Senator Domenici dedicated his entire life to the State and to the people he loved. He served our State in the Senate for 36 years. His decades of service to New Mexico left a lasting impact that will continue to be felt in every corner of our State for many years to come. Many in New Mexico called him Saint Pete because of how relentlessly he fought on the Appropriations and Budget Committees to secure resources for the people of New Mexico. We can still see the fruits of his labors at our State's National Labs, at our military installations, at our colleges and universities, and in water systems and community centers all over our State. That is because, while he worked on the forefront of major policy debates here in the Senate, Pete Domenici always put the interests of New Mexico above all else.

Like myself, Senator Domenici's first public service experience came on Albuquerque's City Council, then called the City Commission. And, at least in my experience, I know that working at that local level was an invaluable way to learn how to hear from diverse viewpoints and stakeholders and find ways to build consensus and get the results for your constituents that you hope to achieve. I have tried to bring that approach with me into the Senate, and I know that Senator Domenici was, in part, so successful because of the skills he learned there.

I am grateful for the example Senator Domenici set for all of us here in this body on how to advance important and complex policy goals in Washington with civility for our colleagues.

Republicans and Democrats alike who worked with him on issues like the budget, energy, national defense, nuclear deterrence, and mental health parity still point to his dedication to bipartisan cooperation and compromise.

Although they didn't always see eye to eye, Senator Domenici, a Republican, and Senator Jeff Bingaman, a Democrat, who served New Mexico alongside him for the vast majority of his time in the Senate, always made a point of improving the lives of New Mexicans by working together. It set a great example for people like me to watch how the two of them worked together. Their spirit of cooperation across party lines is still present in our State's congressional delegation, and I believe Senator Domenici's focus on putting policy results above party politics still resonates today.

One of the greatest examples of this was Senator Domenici's work alongside two progressive Democratic lions of the Senate—Paul Wellstone and Ted Kennedy—to pass mental health parity legislation. Senators Domenici and Wellstone didn't agree on many issues, but they found they both had close, personal experience with and a passion for mental health parity. Both Senators had close family members who had experienced the great challenges of finding a way to pay for mental health treatment. Insurance companies were not required to cover mental health and addiction treatment in those days in the same way they covered treatment for so many other illnesses and diseases. Because of that, most insurance companies simply didn't cover these essential services at all.

Starting in the mid-1990s, Senators Domenici and Wellstone worked together with mental health advocates to advance legislation to finally change that.

After Senator Wellstone was killed in a tragic plane crash, Senator Domenici kept up the fight for 6 more years with a new partner in Senator KENNEDY. The Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act was finally passed in October of 2008, only a few months before Senator Domenici's retirement from the Senate.

That is the type of bipartisanship, legacy, and statesmanship on behalf of the American people that I hope we will all remember for a long, long time to come. We should all try better to keep that spirit alive in the Senate today.

I join all New Mexicans and all Americans in mourning the passing of Senator Pete Domenici. Our thoughts, our deepest condolences, and our prayers are with his wife Nancy and all of his family and loved ones at this time of great loss, for their family and for the State. I am certain that Senator Domenici's legacy will not be forgotten in New Mexico and will not be forgotten in the U.S. Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

THE BUDGET AND TAX REFORM

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, we need tax reform that helps small businesses close these tax loopholes that are taking jobs overseas. Instead, we need to create those jobs at home. We need tax reform that puts money in the pockets of middle-class families in Michigan and all across the country, and we need an American budget that shows what we value as Americans.

Too often, we think of budgets as sterile numbers on a spreadsheet. In reality, budgets are about people. They are about the middle-class Cass City parents who are sitting down to do their taxes and feeling as if it is they, not the wealthiest 1 percent, who are carrying the heaviest burden. They are about helping small business owners in Pontiac, MI, family farmers in Cadillac, and Michigan companies that are creating good-paying jobs. They are also about ensuring that the most vulnerable among us—our children, senior citizens, people with disabilities—are valued and protected.

We cannot consider a budget without considering people. Will it help middle-class families thrive? Will it help small business owners grow? Will it help protect people who cannot protect themselves? Unfortunately, the Republican budget and tax plan suggest that we do not value people, plain and simple.

There are 47 million Americans who depend on Medicare—seniors and people with disabilities. Yet the budget resolution we will be considering tomorrow in the Budget Committee will cut \$473 billion from Medicare. For the low-income children, parents, seniors in nursing homes, and people with disabilities who depend on Medicaid, in that budget resolution, Medicaid would be cut by \$1 trillion.

We just went through this debate twice in efforts to gut healthcare, to gut Medicaid, which would take away healthcare from tens of millions of people. The American people said no, and the Senate said no—twice. Yet we are right back again. Here they go again on the budget resolution, putting forward huge—even bigger—cuts in Medicaid. This time, it is not just Medicaid, it is Medicare, which was not in the last two proposals that we rejected, because they hurt too many people by taking away their healthcare.

Now we have a budget resolution that will be coming to the floor of the Senate. I am assuming they will have enough votes. They certainly will not have mine or those of my Democratic colleagues, but if every Republican in committee votes for it, we will have on the floor a budget resolution that will cut Medicare by \$473 billion and Medicaid by \$1 trillion.

Why is that being done? It is being done to pay for tax cuts for the wealthiest among us. In fact, 80 percent of the tax cuts would go to the top 1 percent. It would be 80 percent who would receive a cut of about \$200,000 a year—a cut. The majority of people in Michigan do not make \$200,000 a year,

but this would be a tax cut of \$200,000 a year, on average. This is not what I was talking about before in our helping small businesses and middle-class families and closing tax loopholes that are taking jobs overseas. This is a straight-up, trickle-down tax cut that has not worked before in creating jobs. It creates a lot of deficits but not jobs, and people in my State are still waiting for it to trickle down to them.

Republicans are asking seniors, people with disabilities, children, and families to give up healthcare in order to fund a huge tax cut for the richest 1 percent, which will cost more than \$2 trillion. To me, that sounds like backwards budgeting for sure.

I do not often quote my friend from Kentucky, but Senator PAUL was absolutely right yesterday. He tweeted this:

This is a GOP tax plan? Possibly 30 percent of middle-class families get a tax hike? I hope the final details are better than this.

I do too. I hope that the final details are a lot better than this if it is going to be something that the people of Michigan will support and benefit from.

Under the Republican plan, a senior citizen in Saginaw, MI, who is making \$20,000 a year would get a tax increase; a married couple with two kids and an income of \$70,000 in Gaylord, MI, would get a tax increase; and a single mom with three kids in Battle Creek, MI, who works really hard every day in juggling and caring for her kids and who earns \$50,000 a year, which never seems to stretch far enough, would actually pay \$1,000 more in taxes because, under the plan, if you have more than one child, you will actually see your taxes go up because the personal exemption for each child will be taken away.

Senator PAUL is right. This is just plain wrong. I do have to give Republicans credit, though. They keep upping the ante. It wasn't even a week ago when they were trying to take healthcare away from people in Michigan and across the country with a plan that would increase costs and reduce healthcare. Now they are trying to take healthcare away from people who need it most by raising taxes on middle-income families and cutting Medicare, as well as Medicaid.

We do need tax reform. I would like very much to see the code simplified, but any tax proposal needs to meet three basic requirements to get my support. First, tax reform needs to be bipartisan, rather than coming up with this proposal in the budget resolution which, once again, just like healthcare, would be jamming something through on a partisan vote. It needs to be bipartisan. It needs to be thoughtful.

Those of us on the Finance Committee are thoughtful people. We worked for 2 years in bipartisan working groups on each section of the Tax Code, getting ready to have a thoughtful discussion and negotiation on real tax reform that would help small businesses grow—by the way, they are cre-

ating a majority of the new jobs—as well as making sure families in America who are struggling would be able to have a simplified Tax Code and a tax cut. So I am all for doing a bipartisan approach, but that is not what is happening here. That is not what will be put into the budget resolution tomorrow, and, unfortunately, it doesn't appear that it is what is going to happen in the Finance Committee.

The other reason for wanting to do this in a bipartisan way is that it is the only way to make sure it is permanent. If you use these truncated processes of reconciliation to try to jam something through, it is not permanent. I know from businesses in Michigan, large and small, as well as families, that to be able to plan, they want to see some permanent changes, and doing it this way is not permanent.

Second, tax reform needs to help businesses create jobs right here at home. Over the last year, I visited more than 120 small businesses in Michigan, and I have seen for myself how they are driving my State's economy. I also know how challenging it can be for them to navigate the complex Tax Code. The owner of a small business shouldn't have to spend hours with an accountant instead of with her customers. We can fix that. At the same time, tax reform needs to preserve important incentives for manufacturers that are creating jobs here in Michigan and in our country.

I don't believe we have an economy unless somebody makes something or somebody grows something. We need to make sure that the tax policy that supports capital intensive companies remains intact, and we need to close the gigantic loopholes that incentivize our jobs going overseas.

I have one simple proposal. It is not everything, but it is a symbol of how bad the situation is. I have been trying to get it passed now for over 10 years here, and it keeps getting blocked and filibustered. It is called the Bring Jobs Home Act. It is very simple. The Tax Code right now allows a company moving overseas to write off all their moving costs. So the workers losing their jobs help pay for the move through their taxes. The community pays for the move through their taxes. It makes no sense to do that. My Bring Jobs Home Act would stop that and say that you don't get to write off the costs when you are leaving our country. However, if you want to come back, if you want to bring jobs home, we are happy to let you write off those costs, and we will give you an extra 20 percent tax credit to bring those jobs home. If you want to leave, you are on your own. That is what our Tax Code should say to businesses that are moving our jobs overseas.

The third important measure in tax reform is that it needs to put money in the pockets of hard-working families. Michigan families are working hard every day to make ends meet. For too long, working-class and middle-class

families have watched as all of the benefits seem to flow to the wealthiest among us over and over and over. Middle-class families are stretched to the breaking point, and it is time they get a break.

That is what the President originally said. This was going to be a middle-class tax cut. Yet, when we run the numbers, it is just not true. For too many, they are going to see a tax increase. As I said before, 80 percent of the Republican tax cuts go to the top 1 percent. You can even break that down more with 0.1 percent, and it is shocking that those individuals are going to get a million-dollar tax cut.

When you look at the majority of people in Michigan who work hard every day and don't earn \$200,000 or more, and you look at the fact that there would be a tax plan brought forward that would actually give a tax cut of \$200,000 a year, and someone with three children or four children would actually see their taxes go up—wait a minute—what is wrong with that picture?

Unfortunately, this budget and tax proposal falls short in a number of ways, beyond Medicare and Medicaid cuts and what is happening in terms of families. As I said before, it is far from bipartisan. As with healthcare, Democrats have been locked out of the process. Republicans have been meeting in secret—no Democrats allowed.

The Republicans are having to use this reconciliation process to force something that will not be permanent. There is little reason to believe that this will help American workers. As I indicated before, it will not close loopholes that are taking jobs overseas.

It doesn't benefit hard-working people and working families that are working really hard to make it every year, every week. It does not benefit them.

The Republican budget and tax proposal targets the most vulnerable. It isn't bipartisan. It will not stop offshoring. It will not benefit the middle class. There is one thing that it will do. There is one thing that those who analyze this agree upon. It will explode the deficit. The independent analysis shows that these proposals would increase the deficit by \$2.4 trillion. So there is \$2.4 trillion in lost revenues that would go to increasing the deficit.

Our friends across the aisle scoff at that. These tax cuts, they say, will pay for themselves. Although in our Finance Committee hearing today, when we asked both the Republican and Democratic experts who were testifying, no one said it would pay for the tax cuts—no one.

President Trump said this huge tax cut will be rocket fuel for our economy. But when you look at the 2001 tax cuts, there was no rocket fuel there. In the 2003 tax cuts, there was no rocket fuel there. In 2012, the State of Kansas had tax cuts that almost caused them to have to go to a 4-day school week for children because of the huge deficits. There was no rocket fuel there.

There are two things to remember about rocket fuel. It is unstable, and, if you are not careful, you will get badly burned.

Budgets aren't about numbers; they are about people. They are about middle-class parents wondering why the wealthiest get all the breaks and they get the bill. It is about a small business owner wondering why she can't run a bakery without hiring an accountant. It is about seniors on disability wondering if Medicare and Medicaid will be there for them while they watch the 0.1 percent get tax breaks and there are future generations being stuck with the bill for tax cuts that will not pay for themselves.

Budgets are about people, and this budget fails them. It is time to work together across the aisle to do what is right, to make sure that the budget and tax proposals work for everybody, not just a privileged few, and that they help companies create jobs here at home and focus on policies to benefit our working families.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNITED STATES V. SANCHEZ-GOMEZ

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, last week I filed an amicus brief calling on the U.S. Supreme Court to hear and then overturn the ruling of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in *United States v. Sanchez-Gomez*. I am proud to have been supported in this effort by all 15 sheriffs in my home State of Arizona, as well as the Western States Sheriffs Association and the National Sheriffs' Association.

I should mention that this is not a partisan issue we are talking about. We have sheriffs representing both parties in Arizona. Every sheriff in Arizona has supported this amicus—all 15.

This decision by the Ninth Circuit is just another example of a ruling that is well outside of the judicial mainstream. Unfortunately, in this case, their ruling dramatically undercuts effective border enforcement, and it creates a dangerous situation for law enforcement and the public. In this case, the Ninth Circuit ruled that it violates the rights of prisoners for marshals and other sheriffs or other courtroom personnel to employ commonplace, thoughtfully crafted courtroom safety policies in which prisoners appear before a judge, fitted with appropriate restraints. This is a significant change from common practice, and it conflicts with two other courts of appeals.

More troubling, the decision has prompted public safety concerns for Arizona and throughout the West. First, law enforcement will have no

choice but to increase the number of officers needed to maintain the safety of individuals inside courtrooms. This means that more U.S. marshals and sheriffs will be spending their days in courthouses instead of pursuing violent fugitives or preventing street crime. Even with these increased numbers, law enforcement officials have expressed concern over the high threshold they are now forced to attain in order to get permission to fit dangerous prisoners with restraints.

By putting these restraints on law enforcement rather than prisoners, this ruling limits the ability of sheriffs and U.S. marshals to ensure the safety of the judges, jurors, lawyers, prisoners, victims, and members of the public inside these courthouses around the country.

This decision also dramatically undercuts the ability of the Federal courts to process illegal immigration border crossing cases as part of Operation Streamline, the very successful border enforcement program that has worked so well in some parts of Arizona. By establishing a zero tolerance approach to illegal border crossings, Operation Streamline has made a dramatic difference in the number of illegal border crossings in communities like Tucson and Yuma.

This year, the Operation Streamline Program averaged around 45 individuals per hearing. Even with these high caseloads, the program could remain efficient, thanks in part to traditional courtroom safety procedures. They could take 40 prisoners at a time and process them if they were allowed to use the current courtroom practices. These old policies allow law enforcement to bring up to 75 individuals into the courtroom at once, but under the Ninth Circuit's decision to relax courtroom safety protocols, law enforcement officers are now forced to limit groups of prisoners before the court to no more than a handful at a time. This makes it increasingly impractical for judges to hear cases due to the amount of time required for law enforcement to move small numbers of prisoners in and out of the courtroom. There simply aren't the hours in a day.

I take the independence of the courts very seriously. That is why, when every sheriff in my State comes to me and says that there is a court ruling that is endangering their deputies and the public, I am going to urge that the decision be overturned by the proper authority.

This makes a difference in Arizona for another reason as well. We have a lot of older courthouses. Some of them are historic courthouses. These buildings simply aren't built for today's needs in terms of access for prisoners and the public within these courthouses. Sometimes they have to go in the same doorways and in the same hallways. If law enforcement and courtroom security personnel are not allowed to have standards in terms of prisoner restraint, then you endanger

the safety of individuals visiting the courthouse and others. You are simply unable to process the number of cases that we have in Arizona, particularly near the border with regard to immigration cases.

I hope that the High Court, the Supreme Court, will grant cert here and examine this ruling. It really makes a difference in a State like Arizona.

With that, I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, this week on an island nation one-tenth the size of Rhode Island, more than 60 countries will gather at the fourth international Our Ocean Conference. Catalyzed by then-Secretary of State John Kerry, the United States hosted the premier international ocean conference in 2014 and 2016. Secretary Kerry's legacy continues with the Malta Conference now going on, hosted by the European Union, and that will be followed by scheduled conferences in Indonesia in 2018 and Norway in 2019.

Nations come to these conferences to share ocean conservation achievements and to pledge future efforts in sustainable fisheries, marine debris prevention, marine protected areas, maritime security, and climate change. At last count, conference organizers in Malta are anticipating more than 150 separate pledges from governments, NGOs, and the private sector. Since Secretary Kerry started it, the Our Ocean Conference has produced hundreds of commitments, totaling nearly \$10 billion and protecting nearly 4 million square miles of ocean. Though the oceans cover more than 70 percent of our Earth, they are often taken for granted. Oceans drive our weather, cool our planet, provide food and income for billions of people, and absorb much of our carbon dioxide emissions.

So for my 181st "Time to Wake Up" speech, I will return to the topic of what we are doing to our oceans. The oceans provide a hard-to-deny reminder of what is happening, thanks to greenhouse gas emissions, climate change denial, and America's legislative paralysis.

Physics and chemistry don't care about fossil fuel industry propaganda. It doesn't affect them at all. Science measures how our carbon pollution continues to drive unprecedented change in the Earth's oceans.

The oceans have absorbed about one-third of all the excess carbon dioxide emitted by human activity since the Industrial Revolution; that is, around 600 gigatons of carbon dioxide absorbed by the ocean. The effect of absorbing all that carbon dioxide is chemical, making ocean water more acidic at the fastest rate in 50 million years. Hu-

mankind has been on the planet only about 800,000 or so years, so 50 million goes way back.

This acidification is potentially calamitous for the ocean ecosystem. Off Washington, Oregon, and Northern California, 50 percent of pteropods were measured to have "severe shell damage," mostly from acidified sea water. If that species collapses, the bottom falls out of the oceanic food chain, with a cascading effect up to us at the top of the food chain.

Ocean acidification is causing real economic concerns on coasts all around the country. It is affecting Florida's reefs, for instance. Rhode Island's clammers, lobstermen, and aquaculture growers watch with real alarm the damage acidified seas are doing on America's northwest coast. Oyster hatcheries there experienced significant losses when new hatches were unable to grow their shells in the acidified seawater. Those hatcheries now need to buffer ocean water to keep the pH at a survivable level for baby clams, oysters, and other shellfish. Well, you can do that for your aquaculture lab, but you can't do that for the ocean. So it bodes well for the future of these shellfish.

In addition to the CO₂ the oceans have absorbed—30 percent of that—they have also absorbed heat. They have absorbed over 90 percent of the excess heat that climate change has trapped in our atmosphere, thanks to the operation of the greenhouse gases we have emitted. The oceans, in doing that, have conferred on us an extraordinary blessing because without their absorbing more than 90 percent of that heat—forget the 2 degrees Centigrade cap that we worry about—we would likely be already more than 36 degrees Centigrade hotter. That isn't just life changing; that is species-changing variation in our planet. When oceans absorb all of this heat, which is equivalent to more than a Hiroshima-style nuclear bomb per second going off, the principle of thermal expansion kicks in. As oceans warm, they expand, and as the world warms from the remaining heat, ice melts. So between the two, sea levels rise.

NOAA, in January, updated global sea level rise estimates based on the latest peer-reviewed scientific literature. Ice sheets and glaciers are melting faster than previously expected, raising global sea level rise estimates in this century—under the "we do nothing on climate change" scenario—by around 20 more inches on average.

Apply these findings to the U.S. coast, and the news gets particularly harsh for the northeast Atlantic coast, including my home State of Rhode Island. Rhode Island's Coastal Resources Management Council is now telling us that we need to plan for as much as 9 to 12 vertical feet of sea level rise by the end of this century. The refusal of the Republican majority to do anything serious about climate change is

going to have a big effect on the very map of my State.

This is the present Upper Narragansett Bay, including Providence up here, our capital city, down to Greenwich Bay down here, and Warwick on the west side. Over here, we have Bristol and Warren on the east side of the image, and it still looks actually very much like it did when early explorers first came to Rhode Island in the 1600s. And it looked very much like that for centuries before, when the Narragansetts and the Wampanoags lived here. But as climate change raises sea levels, all of this is changing rapidly.

The Coastal Resources Management Council has developed something called STORMTOOLS, which is an online simulation to model sea level rise and storm surge, so we can see how rising sea levels will affect my State.

This is the same image as that one. I will put one over the other so that you can see the match. Everything that is blue is land and is now submerged on these 9-to-12-foot sea level estimates. It all has changed quite dramatically. Warwick Neck breaks off and becomes Warwick Neck Island. Much of the town of Barrington here becomes a new salt lake. This is a bedroom community with a lot of wealthy people living in very nice homes, and it all goes under water. Down here, Bristol and Warren become an island, and off of them, Poppasquash Point becomes two islands. This continues all around the State. The map changes, and we become a Rhode Island archipelago. Look at Newport, Little Compton, Tiverton, Providence, Jamestown, Point Judith. Flooded areas in my State represent billions of dollars in losses to Rhode Islanders.

Of course, around the visibly flooded areas are the less visible areas where legal setbacks, flood zones, velocity zones, and other building restrictions prevent construction. In those areas that are still above water, it is still unbuildable because the property has become uninsurable, unmortgageable, or unsellable. That is a pretty hard hit to expect my State to take without objection.

It is not just Rhode Island; all sorts of changes are happening along America's coasts. Up in the Gulf of Maine, ocean waters are warming faster than nearly any other place on earth. A study published in *Elementa* last month found that summer temperatures in the Gulf of Maine last two months longer than in the 1980s. Longer, warmer summers benefit some species, but others get hurt, including what little is left of the iconic cod.

Native villages in Alaska and island communities in Louisiana and Maryland are facing tough decisions about abandoning traditional shorelands and islands and relocating. Around the world, entire nations are planning for relocation as the ocean steadily rises over their island homes.

Layered on top of this sea level rise is the worsening risk of storm surge

and flooding from hurricanes and other storms. The Presiding Officer does not need to be told about this. His State has experienced it firsthand.

This satellite image is a snapshot of this particularly destructive 2017 hurricane system. From the left to right, we see Hurricane Katia, Hurricane Irma—at category 5 strength—and Hurricane Jose down here.

As the recovery efforts continue for our citizens in Puerto Rico, Florida, Louisiana, and Texas, and we look at hundreds of billions of dollars in disaster relief emergency spending, here in Washington we might want to think about helping coastal States around the country get serious about predicting what is coming, shoring up our coastlines, fortifying coastal infrastructure, and preparing for what climate change has in store for us.

Climate change is not the only way we are damaging the oceans. Each year, around 8 million metric tons of plastic waste enters our oceans from land. By 2050, we could see as much plastic in the oceans as fish in the oceans by weight, since plastics do not fully degrade in the ocean. They just break down into smaller and smaller pieces of plastic, and those travel the globe on ocean currents.

Plastic is now everywhere; on our beaches, in our oceans, ingested and entangling our wildlife. It is even in tapwater, salt, and other foods that we humans consume. Plastic waste has been found on remote islands, in deep-sea sediments, and in sea ice.

In an area previously inaccessible to researchers due to that sea ice, the Arctic is apparently releasing frozen plastic back into the oceans. That is how badly we are polluting our oceans. An international research expedition to the North Pole even found chunks of plastic littering that remote region.

Thankfully, there is interest in solving our ocean trash problem in the Senate. At last year's Our Ocean Conference, over \$1 billion was pledged to combat marine debris. Additional commitments are expected this year. Our Senate Oceans Caucus work parallels work around the world. The Senate Oceans Caucus is a bipartisan group. There are 36 of us. We have made marine debris one of our focus areas.

In August, by unanimous consent, we passed the Save Our Seas Act, a bipartisan bill to reauthorize NOAA's marine debris program and expand its ability to deal with severe marine debris events, where tsunamis or huge storms sweep enormous amounts of plastic garbage into the oceans and then ultimately onto our shores.

The bill asks the President to increase U.S. international efforts to reduce marine debris, including improving international waste management practices and improving research on plastics that will actually biodegrade in the ocean. It also directs the U.S. Trade Representative to start considering marine plastic debris—much of which comes from just a few coun-

tries—when dealing with them in future trade agreements.

We reinforced this piece of the bill recently in the National Defense Authorization Act, which we passed just last month.

The Save Our Seas Act garnered support from environmental NGOs, from corporations, from chemical trade groups, but there is still much more work to do. We have abused and ignored our oceans for far too long. The oceans are warning us in every way they know how, and we can't afford to ignore those warnings any longer. We must start taking serious action to respond to what we are doing to our oceans. I promise you, anybody who knows anything about oceans hears those alarm bells ringing. It is time for us to wake up.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the cloture vote on the Hargan nomination occur at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, October 4, and that if cloture is invoked, the Senate vote on confirmation at 3:15 p.m. with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

I further ask that, upon disposition of the Hargan nomination, the Senate vote on cloture on the Quarles nomination, and that if cloture is invoked, the Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination at 10 a.m. on Thursday, October 5; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; further, that the time on Wednesday evening be for debate on the Quarles and Cissna nominations, concurrently.

I further ask that the cloture vote on the Cissna nomination occur upon disposition of the Quarles nomination, and that if cloture is invoked, all time postcloture be considered expired and the Senate vote on confirmation with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

I further ask that following disposition of the Cissna nomination, the Senate resume consideration of the Gingrich nomination, with a vote on cloture at 1:45 p.m. on Thursday; and that if cloture is invoked, the Senate vote on confirmation at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, October 16.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. For the information of all Senators, we have now locked in the following vote schedule: one vote at 11 tomorrow morning, two votes at 3:15 tomorrow afternoon, three votes at 10 a.m. on Thursday, and one vote at 1:45 on Thursday afternoon.

This will allow debate time on all of the pending nominations and accommodate important committee hearings that will be occurring off the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 351, 352, 353, 354, and 355.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Halsey B. Frank, of Maine, to be United States Attorney for the District of Maine for the term of four years; D. Michael Hurst, Jr., of Mississippi, to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi for the term of four years; Jeffrey B. Jensen, of Missouri, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri for the term of four years; Thomas L. Kirsch II, of Indiana, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of Indiana for the term of four years; and William J. Powell, of West Virginia, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of West Virginia for the term of four years.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Frank, Hurst, Jensen, Kirsch, and Powell nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 357 and 358.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.